

CLAIMS

1. A remote access control system adapted to enable the remote control of access to one or more value units by one or more operators, the system including:

- a central control means including control data including an identity structure relating to the permissible behaviour of an access controller and access control data defining operator control over the access controller;
- one or more access controller, each adapted to selectively prevent or enable access to a value unit;
- one or more operator control unit, including actuating means, adapted to enable interaction of an operator with the control system;
- first communication means adapted to provide remote communication between the central control means and one or more operator control unit;
- second communication means adapted to provide remote communication between an operator control unit and one or more access controller;
- and wherein when communication of identity structure to an access controller unit is required, a virtual configuration link is created between the central control means and the access controller for that value unit, via an operator control unit, for the transfer of the identity structure from the central control means to the access controller to initialise the access controller and so allow the access control data to gain access to the access controller.

2. A remote access control system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the identity structure includes an application template and configuration data.

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3. A remote access control system as claimed in either claim 1 or claim 2—  
wherein the access control data includes operator control unit identification  
data, operator identification data and access controller identification data.

5 4. A remote access control system as claimed in claim 3 wherein the access  
control data further includes data relating to the conditions for permissible  
access.

5. A remote access control system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4—  
10 wherein the identity structure is encrypted and can only be deciphered by  
selected access controllers and the central control means.

6. A remote access control system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the control  
data is encrypted.

15 7. A remote access control system according to claim 1 wherein the identity  
structure is inaccessible to an operator of an operator control unit.

8. A remote access control system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims  
20 wherein the first communication means includes a wide area communications  
network.

9. A remote access control system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims  
25 wherein the second communication means includes a wide area  
communications network.

10. A remote access control system as claimed in claim 8 wherein the second  
communication means includes a local communications link.

30 11. A remote access control system according to any one of the preceding claims  
wherein the or each access controller includes recordal means adapted to  
record data relating to the conditions or circumstances of its associated value  
unit.

12. A remote access control system according to claim 11 wherein the data recorded includes the conditions or circumstances of operator access.

13. A remote access control system according to either claim 11 or claim 12 wherein the data recorded is transferred to the central control means, via the virtual configuration link.

14. A remote access control system according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the or each access controller includes a locking mechanism and an electronic control device.

15. A method of remotely controlling access to a value unit through a control system by an operator including:

- providing, at a central control means, access control data relating to the control of access to a value unit by an associated access controller;
- providing, at the central control means, an identity structure relating to the permissible behaviour of the access controller;
- operating an operator control unit via actuating means to interact with the control system;
- forming a virtual configuration link between the central control means and the access controller, via the operator control unit, for transfer of the identity structure from the central control means to the access controller via first communication means providing remote communication between the central control means and the operator control unit and second communication means providing remote communication between the operator control unit and the access controller, the identity structure initialising the access controller to allow the access control data to gain access to the access controller and therefore enable access to the value unit.

16. A method according to claim 15 wherein the identity data is encrypted and can only be deciphered by selected access controllers.

17. A method according to claim 15 wherein the control data is encrypted.

18. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 17 wherein the first communication means includes a wide area communications network.

5 19. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 18 wherein the second communication means includes a wide area communications network.

10 20. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 18 wherein the second communication means includes a local communications link.

15 21. A method according to claim 15 further including recording of data relating to the conditions or circumstances of the value unit by the access controller and transferring this data to the central control means via the virtual configuration link.

20 22. A method according to claim 21 wherein the data recorded includes the conditions or circumstances of operator access of the value unit.

25 23. A remote access control system substantially as herein described and with reference to the accompanying drawings.

24. A method of remotely controlling access to a value unit substantially as herein described by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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